UNDP assistance for promotion of rural tourism

*17. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is offering any assistance for promoting rural tourism in the country;

(b) if so, the scope of such cooperation by the UNDP;

(c) the number of such sites which have been identified for rural tourism; and

(d) the number of such rural tourism circuits which have been operationalised, so far?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (KUMARI SELJA): (a) to (d) Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance (CFA) to the State Governments/Union Territories for infrastructure development in rural sites which have core-competency in art, craft, culture, handloom/textiles etc. and close proximity to tourist destinations and circuits, under the Scheme of Product/Infrastructure Development for Destinations and Circuits. Community participation and capacity building, including skill upgradation in such rural sites are being supported through Government of India — United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project on Endogenous Tourism and Ministry of Tourism's scheme — Capacity Building for Service Providers. Based on the proposal received from State Governments/Union Territories, Ministry of Tourism sanctions Rs. 50.00 lakh for infrastructure development and Rs. 20.00 lakh for capacity building for each rural site, subject to *inter-se* priority and availability of funds in the respective heads. UNDP project has assisted Capacity Building at 36 sites. UNDP has also extended support for other activities such as design development, waste management, development of Management Information System (MIS) and creation and maintenance of website *www.exploreruralindia.org*.

The list of 142 Rural Tourism projects sanctioned to date including 36 with UNDP funds is given in the Statement. [Refer to the Statement appended to the answer to SQ. No. 8 pt (a) and (b)]

Protest against racial attacks

*18. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the local Australian police have been targeting Indian students for protesting against recent racial attacks?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): No, Sir.

River linking project

*19. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state: